

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

MALTA

By Harold R. Newman

Malta's mineral industry relied mainly on trade and the storage of crude oil and refinery products, as well as other nonfuel mineral commodities. The mineral industry, consisting mainly of limestone and salt production, contributed less than 0.5% to the gross national product.

Limestone quarries produced crushed aggregates for use in road construction and lime manufacture and as a concrete additive. Construction companies produced building blocks from their own quarries using globigerina limestone, known locally as franka stone. These blocks were used for local construction purposes. (See table 1.)

With the help of foreign companies, the Maltese Government was exploring offshore areas for petroleum. In 1997, agreements were signed with Agip S.p.A. of Italy for the exploration of an area off the northern coast and with Roc Oil Co. of Australia for the exploration of an area off the southern coast. This exploration continued in 1998 (Malta exploration homepage, [1998], [untitled], accessed December 9, 1998, at URL <http://www.magnet.mt/home/oil-exp/history.htm>).

In 1998, another Australian company, Hardman Resources NL, signed an agreement granting rights to explore for hydrocarbons off the eastern coast (Hardman Resources NL,

August 17, 1998, [untitled], accessed October 16, 1998, at URL <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~harburn/malta.htm>).

Malta was an important transshipment center in the Mediterranean area. The country's strategic location in the middle of the shipping lanes that connect the two ends of the Mediterranean Sea and natural ports are its major assets. The transshipment and reexport of goods was significant to the country's economy along with the storage of petroleum and refinery products. Provisional figures for 1996, the latest year for which data were available, indicated that the entropôt activities of Malta were continuing. The main source of Maltese imports remained the European Union (EU). Major suppliers were Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. Major destinations for exports and reexports also were EU countries, mainly Italy, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. (See tables 2, 3, and 4.)

Malta would like to become a member of the EU and was adopting EU practices and procedures. It was pursuing a policy of gradual economic liberalization, taking some steps to shift the emphasis in trade and financial policies from reliance on direct Government intervention and control to policy regimes that allow a greater role for market mechanisms.

TABLE 1
MALTA: ESTIMATED PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

Commodity 2/	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Limestone thousand metric tons	2,200	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Salt metric tons	30	30	30	30	30

1/ Table includes data available through March 1999.

2/ In addition to listed commodities, a small amount of cement, fertilizer, lime, and plaster is produced, but available information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.

TABLE 2
MALTA: EXPORTS OF MINERAL COMMODITIES IN 1997 1/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Total	Destinations	
		United States	Other (principal)
METALS			
Aluminum metal including alloys:			
Scrap	63	--	Italy 43; United Kingdom 20.
Unwrought	40	--	All to Italy.
Semimanufactures value, thousands	\$2,522	--	Italy \$1,286; United Kingdom \$506; Ireland \$307.
Copper metal including alloys:			
Scrap	768	--	Italy 428; India 175; Spain 56.
Unwrought	10	--	All to Sweden.
Semimanufactures	14	--	Italy 10; Libya 4.
Gold, waste and sweepings value, thousands	\$1,012	--	Italy \$873; Germany \$110; Singapore \$20.
Iron and steel, metal:			
Scrap	10,780	--	Italy 2,067; United Kingdom 325; Spain 322.
Steel, primary forms	8	--	All to Germany.
Semimanufactures:			
Wire	56	--	Ireland 30; Israel 13; Germany 10.
Tubes, pipes, fittings value, thousands	\$16	--	All to United Kingdom.
Lead metal including alloys:			
Scrap	389	--	Israel 228; India 161.
Unwrought	1	--	All to Libya.
Nickel metal including alloys:			
Scrap	2	--	All to United Kingdom.
Semimanufactures value, thousands	\$1	--	All to Ireland.
Tin metal including alloys, semimanufactures do.	\$1	--	All to Germany.
Zinc metal including alloys, semimanufactures 2/ do.	\$11	--	All to Israel.
Other, precious metals, n.e.s., waste and sweepings do.	\$89	--	Germany \$69; Italy \$20.
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS			
Abrasives, n.e.s., grinding and polishing wheels and stones	563	16	Egypt 225; United Arab Emirates 149; Libya 101.
Cement value, thousands	\$2	--	All to United Kingdom.
Clays, crude, unspecified	15	--	Do.
Stone, sand and gravel:			
Dimension stone, worked	2,293	--	France 2,241; Italy 31; Germany 7.
Gravel and crushed rock	3	--	All to United Kingdom.
Sulfur, sulfuric acid value, thousands	\$4	--	All to Libya.
MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS			
Petroleum refinery products, unspecified	22	--	Italy 19; Bulgaria 3.

1/ Table prepared by Glenn J. Wallace.

2/ Includes dust, flakes, and powders.

Source: United Nations Statistical Office (microfiche).

TABLE 3
MALTA: REEXPORTS OF MINERAL COMMODITIES IN 1997 1/

Commodity	Total	Destinations	
		United States	Other (principal)
METALS			
Aluminum metal including alloys:			
Scrap	metric tons	20	-- All to United Kingdom.
Semimanufactures	value, thousands	\$365	-- Italy \$334; Switzerland \$22; Libya \$6.
Copper metal including alloys:			
Scrap	metric tons	18	-- All to Germany.
Unwrought	do.	6	-- All to United Kingdom.
Semimanufactures	value, thousands	\$66	-- Germany \$45; Libya \$7; Italy \$6.
Gold:			
Waste and sweepings		\$1	-- All to Germany.
Metal including alloys, unwrought and partly wrought	kilograms	306	-- Singapore 303; Switzerland 2.
Iron and steel:			
Ore and concentrate, excluding roasted pyrite	metric tons	2	-- All to Tunisia.
Metal:			
Pig iron, cast iron, related materials		\$2	-- All to Italy.
Ferroalloys, silicon metal 2/		\$1	-- All to Libya.
Semimanufactures:			
Flat-rolled products:			
Of iron or nonalloy steel, not clad, plated, coated	value, thousands	\$2	-- Germany \$1; Italy \$1.
Of alloy steel	metric tons	10	-- Mainly to United Kingdom.
Bars, rods, angles, shapes, sections	do.	11	-- All to Libya.
Tubes, pipes, fittings		\$34	-- All to Germany.
Lead metal including alloys, unwrought	value, thousands	\$4	-- South Africa \$2; Italy \$1.
Nickel metal including alloys, semimanufactures	do.	\$13	-- Ireland \$8; Germany \$5.
Platinum-group metals, metal including alloys, unwrought and partly wrought	do.	\$2	-- All to United Kingdom.
Tin metal including alloys, semimanufactures	do.	\$13	-- All to Germany.
Uranium metal including all forms	do.	\$5	-- All to United Kingdom.
Zinc metal including alloys, scrap	metric tons	29	-- Do.
Other, precious metals, n.e.s., waste and sweepings		\$24	-- All to Germany.
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS			
Abrasives, n.e.s.:			
Artificial corundum	metric tons	25	-- All to Tunisia.
Grinding and polishing wheels and stones	do.	3	-- All to Germany.
Cement		\$1	-- All to Italy.
Precious and semiprecious stones other than diamond, natural		\$6	-- All to Belgium-Luxembourg.
Salt and brine		\$5	-- Unspecified.
Stone, sand and gravel, dimension stone:			
Crude and partly worked	metric tons	5	-- All to Italy.
Worked	value, thousands	\$6	-- Libya \$4; Italy \$1.
Sulfur, sulfuric acid	metric tons	1	-- All to Libya.
MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS			
Gas, natural, liquefied	cubic meters	4	-- Antigua/Barbuda 3; United Kingdom 1.
Petroleum refinery products:			
Mineral jelly and wax	value, thousands	\$26	-- Netherlands \$22; Libya \$3; United Kingdom \$1.
Unspecified	metric tons	173586	(3/) United Kingdom 2,434; Italy 953; unspecified 169,640.

1/ Table prepared by Glenn J. Wallace.

2/ May include high-purity silicon.

3/ Less than 1/2 unit.

Source: United Nations Statistical Office (microfiche).

TABLE 4
MALTA: IMPORTS OF MINERAL COMMODITIES IN 1997 1/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Total	Sources	
		United States	Other (principal)
METALS			
Akaline-earth metals	1	-- All from Italy.	
Aluminum:			
Oxides and hydroxides	62	(2/) India 21; Ireland 18; Germany 10.	
Metal including alloys:			
Unwrought	847	121 Venezuela 585; Russia 100; United Arab Emirates 20.	
Semimanufactures	value, thousands \$8,826	\$64 Italy \$6,160; United Kingdom \$833; Greece \$705.	
Antimony metal including alloys, all forms	204	-- All from China.	
Chromium:			
Oxides and hydroxides	2	-- Germany 1; United Kingdom 1.	
Metal including alloys, all forms	545	-- Germany 24; Unspecified 521.	
Cobalt metal including alloys, all forms	1	-- All from Germany.	
Copper metal including alloys:			
Scrap	8	-- United Kingdom 7; Italy 1.	
Unwrought	value, thousands \$13	-- Italy \$9; United Kingdom \$2; Germany \$1.	
Semimanufactures	do. \$4,564	\$92 Germany \$1,040; Italy \$702; Turkey \$627.	
Gold:			
Waste and sweepings	do. \$1	-- All from Germany.	
Metal including alloys, unwrought and partly wrought	kilograms 13,759	23 Singapore 11,852; United Kingdom 786; Belgium-Luxembourg 594.	
Iron and steel:			
Ore and concentrate:			
Excluding roasted pyrite	42	-- All from Italy.	
Pyrite, roasted	1	-- All from United Kingdom.	
Metal:			
Scrap	value, thousands \$73	\$10 Italy \$30; United Kingdom \$20; Belgium-Luxembourg \$11.	
Pig iron, cast iron, related materials	110	4 United Kingdom 75; Belgium-Luxembourg 29; Italy 2.	
Ferroalloys, unspecified	4	-- All from United Kingdom.	
Steel, primary forms	111	-- Germany 53; Italy 36; Spain 12.	
Semimanufactures:			
Flat-rolled products:			
Of iron or nonalloy steel:			
Not clad, plated, coated	4,326	-- Turkey 1,561; Belgium-Luxembourg 1,465; Italy 1,071.	
Clad, plated, coated	9046	-- Italy 2,646; Singapore 1,699; Germany 1,267.	
Of alloy steel	value, thousands \$750	-- United Kingdom \$230; Italy \$201; Turkey \$119.	
Bars, rods, angles, shapes, sections	do. \$11,672	\$7 Italy \$5,816; Turkey \$2,993; United Kingdom \$960.	
Rails and accessories	88	-- United Kingdom 64; Italy 24.	
Wire	4,595	1 Italy 2,256; Turkey 1,201; Romania 600.	
Tubes, pipes, fittings	value, thousands \$6,906	\$68 United Kingdom \$2,703; Italy \$2,265; Greece \$545.	
Lead:			
Oxides	\$1	-- All from United Kingdom.	
Metal including alloys:			
Unwrought	9	-- Mainly from Netherlands.	
Semimanufactures	27	-- United Kingdom 24; Switzerland 2.	
Magnesium metal including alloys:			
Unwrought	value, thousands \$6	\$5 Spain \$1.	
Semimanufactures	do. \$19	-- All from Italy.	
Manganese metal including alloys, all forms	1	-- Do.	
Mercury	value, thousands \$2	-- Italy \$1; United Kingdom \$1.	
Nickel:			
Matte and speiss	do. \$5	-- All from Germany.	
Metal including alloys:			
Unwrought	do. \$4	\$1 United Kingdom \$3.	
Semimanufactures	do. \$149	\$1 Germany \$134; United Kingdom \$8; Ireland \$4.	
Platinum-group metals, metal including alloys, unwrought and partly wrought	do. \$13	-- Germany \$7; United Kingdom \$6.	
Silver metal including alloys, unwrought and partly wrought	do. \$433	-- Germany \$237; United Kingdom \$182; Italy \$56.	
Tin metal including alloys:			
Unwrought	do. \$9	-- Italy \$4; France \$2; United Kingdom \$2.	
Semimanufactures	121	(2/) Italy 94; France 12; Germany 12.	

See footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 4--Continued
MALTA: IMPORTS OF MINERAL COMMODITIES IN 1997 1/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Total	Sources	
		United States	Other (principal)
METALS--Continued			
Titanium:			
Oxides	45	-- Germany 40; Italy 4; United Kingdom 1.	
Metal including alloys:			
Unwrought, including waste and scrap	value, thousands	\$2	-- All from Spain.
Semimanufactures		631	-- All from Germany.
Unwrought, including waste and scrap	value, thousands	\$2	-- All from Sweden.
Semimanufactures	do.	\$5	-- United Kingdom \$4; Italy \$1.
Thorium metal including all forms	do.	\$10	-- All from United Kingdom.
Zinc:			
Oxides	29	-- Netherlands 20; Belgium-Luzembourg 4; United Kingdom 4.	
Metal including alloys:			
Unwrought		83	2 Belgium-Luzembourg 75; United Kingdom 5; Italy 2.
Blue powder		16	Italy 9; United Kingdom 4; France 3.
Semimanufactures, excluding blue powder		21	-- Italy 15; Germany 4; United Kingdom 1.
Other:			
Oxides and hydroxides	3	-- Norway 2; Netherlands 1.	
Ashes and residues	12	-- Germany 11; Albania 1.	
Abrasives, n.e.s.:			
Natural, corundum, emery, pumice, etc.	2,148	303 Turkey 1,046; United Kingdom 405; France 328.	
Artificial corundum	256	-- China 107; Slovenia 83; Poland 54.	
Grinding and polishing wheels and stones	521	(2/) Italy 259; Slovenia 200; Germany 23.	
Barite and witherite	36	-- Italy 20; Netherlands 12; United Kingdom 4.	
Boron:			
Crude natural borates	1	-- All from Germany.	
Oxides and acids	value, thousands	1	-- All from United Kingdom.
Bromine, fluorine, iodine	1	-- Do.	
Cement	246,728	-- Italy 218,201; Turkey 15,546; Greece 8,402.	
Chalk	427	-- Spain 238; United Kingdom 147; France 41.	
Clays, crude:			
Bentonite	72	3 United Kingdom 63; Italy 6.	
Kaolin	208	5 Italy 126; United Kingdom 70; Netherlands 6.	
Unspecified	381	1 United Kingdom 207; Spain 156; Italy 8.	
Diamond, natural:			
Gem, not set or strung	value, thousands	\$184	\$1 Belgium-Luzembourg \$85; United Kingdom \$72; Israel \$19.
Industrial stones	do.	\$23	-- Belgium-Luzembourg \$20; United Kingdom \$3.
Diatomite and other infusorial earth	166	19 Italy 84; United Kingdom 30; Spain 18.	
Fertilizer materials:			
Crude, n.e.s.	661	-- United Kingdom 490; Netherlands 77; Ireland 73.	
Manufactured:			
Ammonia	34	-- Netherlands 17; France 17; United Kingdom 6.	
Nitrogenous	773	-- France 397; Germany 267; Belgium-Luzembourg 86.	
Phosphatic	20	-- Italy 17; Netherlands 3.	
Potassic	27	-- Israel 13; Italy 13; United Kingdom 1.	
Unspecified and mixed	941	-- Belgium-Luzembourg 278; Germany 221; Italy 174.	
Graphite, natural	value, thousands	\$1	-- All from unspecified Europe.
Gypsum and plaster	832	1 Spain 462; Italy 346; United Kingdom 23.	
Lime	641	-- Italy 627; Germany 7; France 6.	
Magnesium compounds, oxides and hydroxides	value, thousands	\$39	\$21 Japan \$17; United Kingdom \$1.
Mica:			
Crude including splittings and waste	18	-- United Kingdom 16; Ireland 2.	
Worked including agglomerated splittings	1865	-- Italy 1,664; unspecified 201.	
Pigments, mineral, iron oxides and hydroxides, processed	81	2 Italy 39; United Kingdom 31; Spain 8.	
Precious and semiprecious stones other than diamond:			
Natural	value, thousands	\$90	-- Germany \$61; United Kingdom \$10; Switzerland \$6.
Synthetic	do.	\$66	\$2 Switzerland \$25; Italy \$23; Austria \$9.
Salt and brine	2,590	6 Italy 1,424; United Kingdom 795; Israel 323.	
Sodium compounds, n.e.s.:			
Soda ash, manufactured	492	-- Bulgaria 246; Republic of Korea 105; Turkey 54.	
Sulfate, manufactured	421	-- Spain 315; Austria 40; Germany 34.	

See footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 4--Continued
MALTA: IMPORTS OF MINERAL COMMODITIES IN 1997 1/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Total	Sources	
		United States	Other (principal)
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS--Continued			
Stone, sand, and gravel:			
Dimension stone:			
Crude and partly worked	6,378	-- Italy 5,938; Syria 133; China 105.	
Worked	value, thousands \$369	-- Italy \$355; Spain \$7; United Kingdom \$4.	
Dolomite, chiefly refractory-grade	57	-- Norway 47; Ireland 6; United Kingdom 4.	
Gravel and crushed rock	12,103	-- Italy 11,785; China 125; France 103.	
Limestone other than dimension	2	-- All from France.	
Quartz and quartzite	82	-- Italy 56; India 20; United Kingdom 6.	
Sand other than metal-bearing	1,021	6 Italy 695; Belgium-Luxembourg 130; Germany 74.	
Sulfur:			
Elemental:			
Crude including native and byproduct	142	-- Italy 130; Germany 11.	
Colloidal, precipitated, sublimed	60	-- Italy 59; United Kingdom 1.	
Dioxide	2	-- All from Italy.	
Sulfuric acid	2,172	-- Italy 1,997; United Kingdom 67; Netherlands 63.	
Talc, steatite, soapstone, pyrophyllite	233	4 Italy 68; Finland 56; France 36.	
Vermiculite, perlite, chlorite	33	-- Italy 23; Greece 5; United Kingdom 4.	
Other:			
Crude	88	2 Spain 37; France 21; Netherlands 16.	
Slag and dross, not metal-bearing	195	-- Germany 189; Albania 6.	
MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS			
Asphalt and bitumen, natural	16,491	3,600	Italy 11,566; Brazil 24; unspecified Pacific 1,300.
Carbon black	320	18	Germany 220; Canada 52; Denmark 26.
Coal:			
Briquets of anthracite and bituminous coal	46	-- All from Australia.	
Unspecified	686	18	South Africa 668.
Coke and semicoke	511	-- South Africa 496; Italy 15.	
Gas, natural:			
Gaseous	4	-- All from Italy.	
Liquefied	cubic meters 15	-- Do.	
Peat including briquets and litter	1,011	-- Netherlands 400; United Kingdom 280; Ireland 188.	
Petroleum:			
Crude	1	-- All from France.	
Refinery products:			
Liquefied petroleum gas	4,322	-- Libya 3,186; Italy 710; Greece 384.	
Mineral jelly and wax	408	7 Hungary 190; Germany 142; China 35.	
Bitumen and other residues	956	-- Spain 950; Bulgaria 2; Denmark 2.	
Bituminous mixtures	73	-- Italy 42; United Kingdom 27; Belgium-Luxembourg 5.	
Unspecified	407,218	2,133	Libya 379,110; Italy 13,645; Russia 10,453.

1/ Table prepared by Glenn J. Wallace.

2/ Less than 1/2 unit.

Source: United Nations Statistical Office (microfiche).